

TALANOA TOKTOK

Official Publication of the Pacific Conference of Churches

A shared vision

RELATIONSHIPS and vision-sharing have been part of the Pacific Conference of Churches Secretariat's work in March. Our visitors from Bread for the World, Micah Australia and Australia's National Council of Churches have visited, discussed programmes with staff, met the PCC membership in Fiji and planted trees at the Lomana Na Vulagi Farm.

It's been a time to share visions and build partnerships which will benefit Pacific churches for years to come.



Eyes on the future ... our guests from Micah Australia and Australia's National Council of Churches visit the PCC's eco-farm



Pray for peace in Ukraine

WE joined the ecumenical community in Fiji to pray for peace in Ukraine. Members of the Diplomatic Corps prayed and lit candles at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in an event organised by the Fiji Council of Churches

Patriarchy is alive

Churches fail to recognise female theologians

FEMALE theologians continue to face bias from their male colleagues in the church.

In a discussion on International Women's Day, regional female theologians shared their experiences, some stating they felt like second class citizens, even in theological colleges. In communities, female theologians are often seen first as women. This means they are less recognised or respected than their male counterparts who have the same training. The PCC organised the IWD event at the Methodist Lay Training Centre, Davuilevu. It was attended by Pacific women from the Methodist, Anglican and Salvation Army denominations. Participants said cultural structures within the church remained a barrier to female participation as theologians.



Working with women ... Sepesa Rasili and Titilia Vakadewavosa at the International Women's Day Event

Girls learn to break the bias

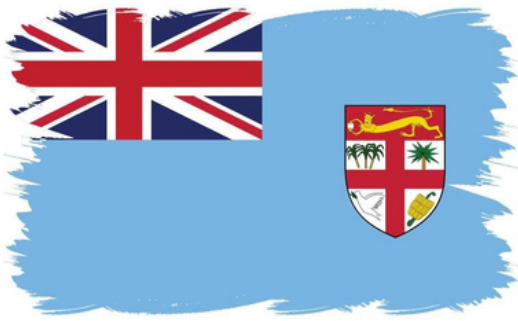
GIRLS from different denominations gathered at the Saint Pius X Catholic Parish, Raiwaqa, Fiji on International Women's Day to talk about bias.

They were introduced to Biblical examples to the inclusivity of women, discussed issues affecting girls in their community and learned about the ideals of International Women's Day. Participants were drawn from the Catholic, Methodist, Salvation Army and Pentecostal churches. Also included in the event were girls who did not attend church.

Youth out at sea

OUR youth activities took to the sea this month aboard the voyaging canoe Uto Ni Yalo (Heart of the Spirit). PCC staff joined young people from Bua Province and the Rethinking the Ecological Map (REM)

Youth to visit the villages of Lomanikoro and Namalata. They discussed development and social issues affecting the communities and how to use traditional knowledge and spirituality to effect positive change.



Relocation in Fiji

WHILE Fiji's leaders were at COP in Glasgow, Fijian communities affected by Climate Change met at a side event in Suva. Among them were delegates from a small coastal community at Togoru on the southern coast of the main island, Viti Levu. It's one of more than 100 communities threatened by coastal erosion and in need of immediate help.



On the rise coastline washed away at Togoru, Fiji, by rising sea levels

Danger in paradise



About sea level rise

More than 160 Fijian communities have been affected by coastal erosion

AT Togoru in Fiji, the rising sea eats away between 1.3-1.5 metres of coastline every year. Coconut trees - the mainstay of most Pacific communities - have been washed away and salt water intrusion has started to affect soil fertility, hampering crop and vegetable growth.

When the PCC team led by General Secretary, Reverend James Bhagwan, visited Togoru, they were told that spring tides which previously occurred twice a year now happen every two weeks. Despite visits from Government officials and Civil Society, Togoru has received no help. The PCC has conducted an initial survey of the area as a follow up activity to the PCC-Fiji Council of Churches-Transcend Oceania

COP 26 side event last year attended by Togoru residents. Water, power and coastal protection have been identified as immediate needs and a work plan has been drawn up to address the issues. Frequent communication will be maintained with the community and results of the planned project will form part of a regional ecumenical document to assist with relocation guidelines

It costs approximately \$USD1 million to relocate a Pacific community

Villages in the Solomon islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji are affected by rising sea levels

Kiribati and Tuvalu are the worst affected nations

Talanoa Toktok



Brot
für die Welt



Partnerships plan for progress

PARTNERSHIPS play an integral part in the PCC's work. Some of the regional programmes are funded completely by donor partners while others receive partial support.

This month, the PCC has been in discussion with a number of partners on the possibility of joint projects around the region in member churches.

There have also been ongoing discussions with possible new funders.



Bush walk ... Finance Committee Chair, Livai Tuisaravere, with visitors from the National Council of Churches Australia at the Lomana Na Vulagi Farm



Resource centre opens

THE new PCC Resource Centre has opened, bringing together years of research material from the region. Currently available only on site at the PCC Secretariat, plans are underway to digitise the service.

The Resource Centre was created by Robert RJ Howard, a mission volunteer from Global Ministries USA, one of the PCC's valuable partners.

With the resource centre officially opened, RJ has returned to Arizona after completing his internship.

Talks focus on governance

GOVERNANCE was the focus of talks with several donors in the first quarter of 2022.

In order to secure funding for church projects, it is important that the PCC meets the requirements of donor agencies, as well as internal financial and governance policies.

The PCC accounts are audited every year and made available to donor agencies, partners and the Executive Committee.

Last year the PCC accounts were audited by Ernst and Young, sent to the Finance and General Business Committee and approved at the Executive Committee meeting in December.